

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER ONE: MUSEUM BEGINNINGS IN THE NATIONAL PARKS	1
Natural Parks	1
Archeological Parks	11
Historical Parks	18
CHAPTER TWO: PHILANTHROPY AND GUIDANCE, 1924-1934	29
The Yosemite Museum	29
Yavapai and Bear Mountain	38
The Yellowstone Museums	42
Park Museums and the Field Division of Education	49
CHAPTER THREE: THE MUSEUM DIVISION, 1935-1946	67
The Eastern Museum Division	67
The Interior Department Museum	78
Eastern Park Museum Projects to 1942	82
The Museum Division Program in the West to 1942	98
The Wartime Museum Program	106
CHAPTER FOUR: THE MUSEUM BRANCH, 1947-1964	117
Resumption of Museum Development	117
Museum Growth Before Mission 66	128
Museums in Mission 66	146
CHAPTER FIVE: THE MUSEUM PROGRAM, 1964-1982	173
Redirection of Exhibit Functions	174
Branch of Museum Development, 1964-1967	179
Branch of Museum Operations, 1964-1967	183
Division of Museums, 1967-1973	185
Division of Exhibits, 1974-1980	197
Branch/Division of Reference Services, 1974-1980	201
Division of Museum Services, 1974-1981	202

CHAPTER SIX: FURNISHED HISTORIC STRUCTURE	
MUSEUMS	221
Historic House Museums in the National Parks	
to 1941	222
Museum Branch Involvement, 1946-1955	231
Evolution of the Furnishing Plan, 1955-1982	235
Operational Aspects, 1958-1982	246
CHAPTER SEVEN: COLLECTIONS	257
Natural Resource Collections	258
Cultural Resource Collections	267
CHAPTER EIGHT: COLLECTION MANAGEMENT	291
Accession Policies and Procedures	291
Museum Records	302
Specimen Protection and Routine Care	311
Curatorial Staffing	322
CHAPTER NINE: CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL AND	
SCIENTIFIC OBJECTS	335
The Empirical Phase, 1916-1948	337
The Scientific Conservation Phase, 1949-1982	342
SOURCES CONSULTED	367
INDEX	375

FOREWORD

While obtaining degrees in biology and entomology from the University of Rochester, Ralph Lewis studied museum methods and worked in the university's natural history museum. In 1935 he came to work for the National Park Service as an assistant curator. He helped plan several new park museums and the Interior Department's headquarters museum in Washington before serving a year-long Rockefeller internship at the Buffalo Museum of Science in 1937-38. After five years as park historian at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, he became assistant chief of the Park Service's Museum Branch in 1946 and chief in 1954, overseeing the full range of Park Service museum activities. When development and operational functions were organizationally separated in 1964 he was made chief of the Branch of Museum Operations, the post he held until his retirement in 1971.

Fortunately, Ralph's involvement with park museums did not end at that point. Having edited the Park Service's 1941 *Field Manual for Museums* and written much of the Service's *Museum Handbook*, he was ideally equipped to prepare their sequel, the *Manual for Museums* published by the Service in 1976. As a volunteer, he has produced collection management plans for seven parks and spent thousands of hours arranging, cataloging, and caring for the collection at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. The origin of the current work, another labor of love, is explained in his preface.

The Park Service got far more than it expected when Ralph turned in the manuscript for this book. A work of true scholarship, it placed the evolution of the Service's museum program in a broad professional context. Because it was also too long to be published for convenient access in a single volume, Bureau Historian Barry Mackintosh agreed to edit it down. With characteristic generosity, Ralph had credited at length virtually everyone ever involved with the museum program; Barry had to delete some of the more peripheral players. At the same time, while Ralph gave due attention to his predecessors and successors at the helm of the program, he alluded to himself so rarely and indirectly that his name appears in the narrative only through the editor's intervention. Many of Ralph's notes and citations, which ran to nearly two hundred pages, had to be deleted or compressed. Readers wishing more detail than remains may consult his manuscript in the National Park Service History Collection at the Harpers Ferry Center Library.

From his long and leading role in the Service's museum program, Ralph necessarily came to this project with personal opinions on many of its personnel, policies, and practices over the years. He clearly believes,

for example, that the exhibition or other use of museum objects should not take precedence over their preservation. Although he is scrupulously fair in his treatment of controversial issues, always giving those of differing viewpoints their due, his own biases are evident. Readers not sharing them may not agree with all he says, but they should nevertheless welcome the unique perspective he brings to his story.

Museum curatorship in the National Park Service has benefited enormously from Ralph Lewis's leadership and ongoing involvement. Those who worked with him, and those of us who have followed him and cherish his continued presence, already well know this. Those who have not been so privileged will surely learn it from this book. Ralph may have been unduly modest about his own contributions, but his concern for park museums comes through loud and clear. If what follows leads more people to share this concern, it will surely have met his intent.

Ann Hitchcock
Chief Curator
National Park Service

PREFACE

Museums have played vital roles in interpreting park resources and themes to the public. Like museums elsewhere, park museums are defined largely by the work of curators. Curators gather and care for collections of objects, record and study them, and use them in exhibits and other interpretive media. In the national parks work of this kind went on for years before any staff member received the title of curator, and many people with other titles—superintendents, rangers, naturalists, historians, archeologists, and clerical and custodial workers—still do such work. Conservators, museum registrars, exhibit designers, preparators, and technicians regularly collaborate with curators as different sorts of museum specialists. They are all part of curatorship to the extent that they help acquire, take care of, or use museum specimens. They have created much of the history in the pages that follow.

Arthur C. Allen conceived and initiated this study while chief of the Division of Museum Services at the National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center. He hoped that a more complete picture of how curatorial work had developed in the Park Service might clarify long-standing problems his division faced. Ten months, he thought, should suffice for someone familiar with the background of the museum program to search out and compile a trustworthy digest of the facts. A purchase order dated August 3, 1978, outlined the project's proposed scope and provided for incidental expenses the research might entail. This writer promptly began work, but the sources proved much more voluminous and scattered than anticipated. Although the study gathered material Allen found useful, research and writing were far from complete when he transferred from the museum program to the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1983. Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock, who inherited the curatorial problems in acute form upon her appointment in 1980, encouraged continuation of the project.

It became apparent early that a review limited to curatorial matters in a narrow sense would fail to place them adequately in context. The curatorial imperatives had been so closely interwoven into the whole fabric of museum work in the parks that they resisted proper analysis in isolation. Consequently, this study first traces growth of the museum program as a whole. The first five chapters chronicle museum development in the national parks from the earliest park museums to 1982. The sixth chapter examines the distinctive development of furnished historic structure museums in the parks. The last three chapters focus more sharply on the curatorial aspects of park museums: the collections, their management, and their care.

The National Park Service History Collection in the Harpers Ferry Center Library was the principal source of data used in this study. What usefulness the resulting document has owes much to those responsible for the collection: David H. Wallace as the initiator, Richard W. Russell as its first curator, Ruthanne Heriot as special collection librarian, and David Nathanson as chief of HFC's Branch of Library, Archives, and Graphics Research. Nathanson's knowledge of the collection and its organization and his sustained professional helpfulness toward its use were reflected in the effective cooperation received from his staff, especially library technician Nancy Lee Potts and secretaries Beverley Foltz and Susan Myers.

Richard Russell made an additional important contribution by giving the writer access to diaries of his father, Carl P. Russell, and letters between his father and mother concerning day-to-day developments during critical formative periods of the Park Service museum program. These manuscripts valuably supplemented the carefully preserved and organized Carl Parcher Russell Papers in the archives of the Washington State University Library at Pullman. The writer acknowledges effective assistance from the chief of the library's Manuscripts-Archives Division in consulting this collection also.

Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock supported work on the study in numerous ways. She permitted continued use of office facilities, opened Curatorial Services Division files, reviewed drafts, and made many constructive suggestions. Members of her staff, especially Anthony M. Knapp, were also supportive. Art Allen and Thomas Vaughan took active interest in the project as long as they remained at Harpers Ferry and continued to review chapter drafts and provide helpful comments after moving to new responsibilities. In the division's Harpers Ferry unit all the staff curators including Richard Borges, Gordon Gay, Anne Jordan, Diana Pardue, and Suzanne Schell as well as museum specialist Donald Cumberland supplied needed data or offered leads in answer to the writer's frequent questions. In later stages John Hunter helped surmount technical difficulties. Staff curator Kathleen Triggs Byrne helped especially in accessing National Catalog and clearinghouse details. Carolyn Moler, unit secretary, provided essential assistance both informational and technical, and her well-kept files were an important source of data. Clerk-typists Doris Basch and Anna Petry ably supplemented her technical help.

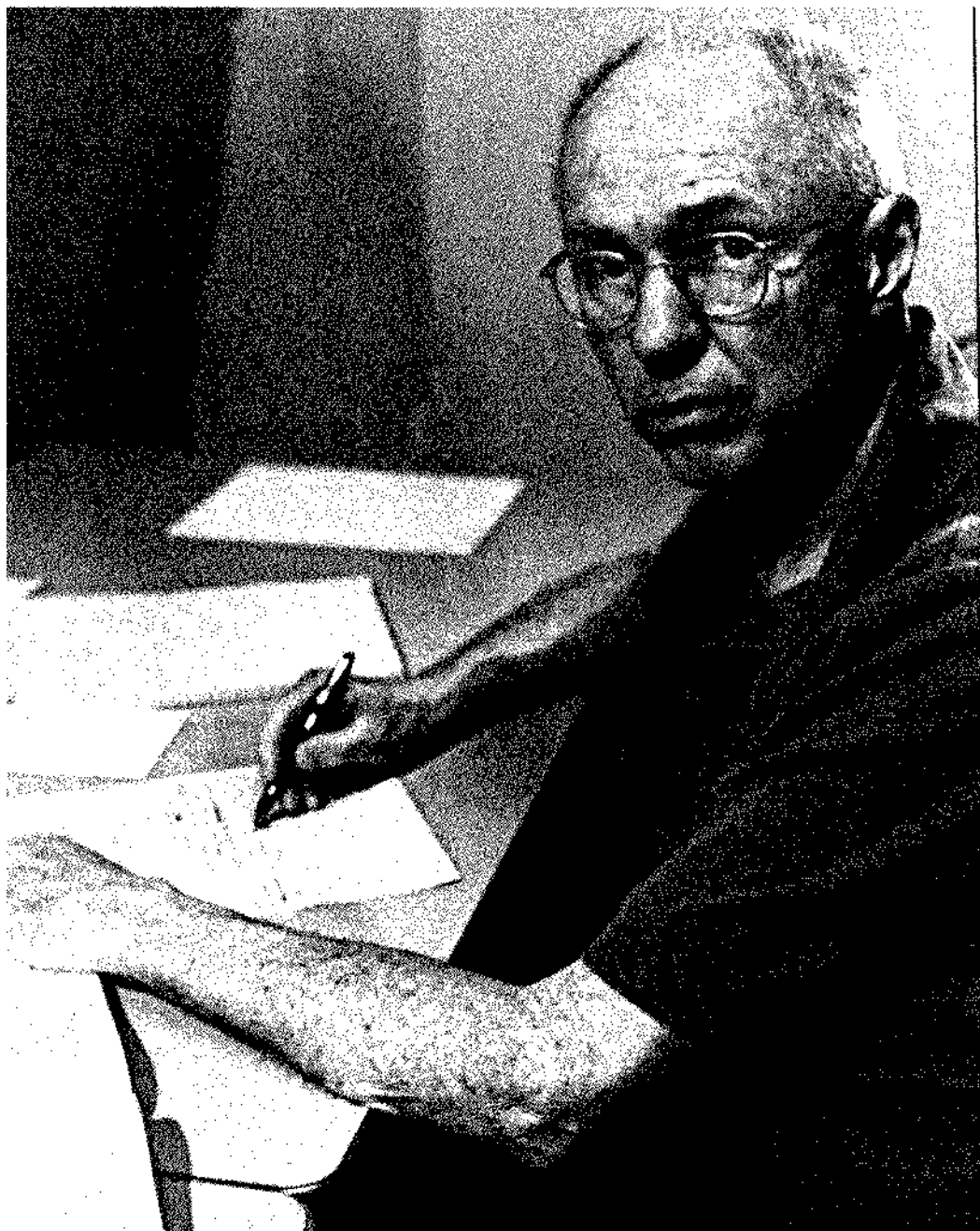
Harpers Ferry Center staff members aided the project on numerous occasions. Personnel officer Shirley H. Caniford and her staff, including Marilyn Longerbeam and Carolyn West, filled in employment dates for several significant museum workers whose records were incomplete in other sources. The personnel staff also supplied information on classification standards for Park Service museum positions. Sarah M. Olson, chief of the Division of Historic Furnishings, and David Wallace helpfully reviewed the

chapter on furnished historic structure museums and opened the Vera Craig files. John Demer as chief, Division of Conservation, provided access to his division's files while conservators Gregory Byrne, Thomas Carter, Toby Raphael, Daniel Riss, Barclay Rogers, and Ronald Sheetz filled information gaps for the final chapter. Dan Riss also helped locate references in the division library and called items of potential relevance to the writer's attention. Exhibits specialist Olin Nave verified some needed data. HFC kindly granted permission to consult the transcript of an interview of Dr. and Mrs. Jean C. Harrington by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr.

Among present and former field staff who took pains to answer queries and supply information, the writer is especially grateful to regional curator Jonathan W. Bayless; collections manager Barbara L. Beroza, Yosemite National Park; supervisory museum curator Allen S. Bohnert, Southeast Archeological Center; museum curator Susan J. Buchel, Nez Perce National Historical Park; park naturalist Richard Burns, Sequoia National Park; Robert C. Heyder, superintendent of Mesa Verde National Park; Louise Hinchliffe, Grand Canyon National Park's librarian; Richard Howard, chief of interpretation and resource management, and John M. Andresen, ranger, at Casa Grande Ruins National Monument; museum specialist Kathleen L. Manscill, Great Smoky Mountains National Park; supervisory park ranger Betty McSwain, Pipestone National Monument; Betty C. Monkman, associate curator; at the White House; Franklin G. Smith, superintendent of Chamizal National Memorial; Jack Smith of Mesa Verde National Park; Roy W. Weaver, superintendent of Nez Perce National Historical Park; regional curator Pamela B. West, and Peter S. White, University of North Carolina.

Additional help was received from Virginia L. Cummings and her colleagues at the Buffalo Museum of Science. National Park Service bureau historian Barry Mackintosh provided advice and encouragement as he reviewed and edited chapter drafts. For assistance in obtaining illustrations we thank Thomas A. DuRant, curator of the NPS historic photographic collections; Ray Bowers, Carnegie Institution of Washington; Henry Lie, Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard University Art Museums; Martha L. Mitchell, Brown University archivist; and Elizabeth L. Robins, registrar, Buffalo Museum of Science. Staff curator Elizabeth M. Browning prepared the comprehensive index.

Dorothy L. Lewis not only reviewed critically the study in all stages of the draft but also endured without complaint the demands on disposable time made by the project through more than a decade.



Ralph H. Lewis